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RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY
OF MILPITAS HIGH-SPEED RAIL

WHEREAS, a high-speed rail line connecting northern and southern California would relieve highway and air traffic congestion between the Bay Area and Los Angeles, which is one of the busiest air traffic corridors in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the California High-Speed Rail Authority, the organization responsible for planning, designing, constructing, and operating the state's high-speed rail system, plans to run the first leg between Los Angeles and San Francisco through San Jose. Ultimately, the line would be extended to Oakland, Sacramento and San Diego; and

WHEREAS, the California High-Speed Rail Authority is recommending two alignment options- through the Pacheco Pass or a series of tunnels through the Diablo Range- to bring high-speed rail into the San Francisco Bay Area through San Jose. The line would then split, with one set of tracks paralleling the Caltrain Commuter Rail Corridor up the Peninsula to San Francisco and the other set running up the East Bay to Oakland; and

WHEREAS, the California High-Speed Rail Authority concluded that entering the Bay Area from the south would offer faster travel times; more frequent service to San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland; higher ridership; and more revenue; and

WHEREAS, the California High-Speed Rail Authority considered and rejected one other Bay Area alignment, the so-called Altamont Pass alignment. Following this route, the high-speed rail trains would enter the Bay Area over the Altamont Pass to Union City. From Union City, the trains would then split into three lines- one south to San Jose, another north to Oakland and a third to San Francisco over a new bridge across the bay; and

WHEREAS, the California High-Speed Rail Authority concluded that the Altamont Pass alignment would be problematic from an operational and environmental standpoint. According to the authority, splitting the service into three, rather than two, lines would reduce train frequencies, and ridership, while substantially increasing operating costs. In addition, the authority noted that the costs of building a new rail bridge across San Francisco Bay and the environmental hurdles that would need to be overcome to do so make the Altamont Pass alignment impractical; and

WHEREAS, the California High-Speed Rail Authority released its program-level environmental document in late January 2004, and is now in the process of holding a series of public hearings on it throughout the state. In addition, the authority will be accepting written public comments on this environmental document until mid-August 2004; and

WHEREAS, a southern alignment into the Bay Area for the proposed high-speed rail system will maximize ridership, minimize operating costs and ensure that Silicon Valley is well served by the new high-speed rail line; and

WHEREAS, a southern alignment into the Bay Area, by utilizing the entire Caltrain Commuter Rail Service Corridor, will help Caltrain achieve several of its long-term goals, such as electrification, grade-separating the corridor, and increasing the speed and frequency of the service. These benefits could not be achieved for the entire Caltrain Corridor by using the Altamont Pass alignment for the state's high-speed rail system.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that (City Name) supports the California High-Speed Rail Authority's conclusion to use one of the two southern alignments (Pacheco Pass or Diablo Range) into the San Francisco Bay Area for the state's proposed high-speed rail system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that (City Name) will communicate this position to the California High-Speed Rail Authority in writing as part of the public record for the authority's program-level environmental document.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 18th day of May, 2004, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Gail Blalock, City Clerk

Jose S. Esteves, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Steven T. Mattas, City Attorney

SAMPLE TALKING POINTS HIGH-SPEED RAIL

- The California High-Speed Rail Authority is recommending two alignment options—through the Pacheco Pass or a series of tunnels through the Diablo Range—to bring high-speed rail into the San Francisco Bay Area through San Jose. The line would then split, with one set of tracks paralleling the Caltrain Commuter Rail Corridor up the Peninsula to San Francisco and the other set running up the East Bay to Oakland.
- The California High-Speed Rail Authority considered and rejected one other Bay Area alignment, the so-called Altamont Pass alignment. Following this route, the high-speed rail trains would enter the Bay Area over the Altamont Pass to Union City. From Union City, the trains would then split into three lines—one south to San Jose, another north to Oakland and a third to San Francisco over a new bridge across the bay.
- The alignment for entry of the state's proposed high-speed rail system into the Bay Area is of importance to Santa Clara County.
- A southern alignment would have higher ridership, raise more revenue, be easier and less costly to operate, and offer faster travel times for passengers than the Altamont Pass alignment.
- A southern alignment would provide more direct, faster and more frequent service to the three largest urban centers in the region—San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland. The Altamont Pass alignment would split service between these areas, resulting in San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland all having fewer high-speed rail trains serving them.
- By utilizing the entire Caltrain Corridor, a southern alignment into the Bay Area would help Caltrain achieve several of its long-term goals, such as electrification, grade-separating the corridor, and increasing the speed and frequency of the Caltrain service. These benefits could not be achieved by using the Altamont Pass alignment.
- The Altamont Pass alignment would not provide direct, mainline service to San Jose, the largest city in the Bay Area.
- The Altamont Pass alignment would require a new bridge to be built across the bay for service to San Francisco, which would be costly, have significant environmental consequences and result in significant schedule delays.

- The Altamont Pass alignment already has been thoroughly studied by the California High-Speed Rail Authority and was withdrawn from further consideration because it would be problematic from an operational and environmental standpoint. There is no compelling reason for the authority to reconsider this alignment.

May 21, 2004

High Speed Rail Authority Board
Draft Program EIR/EIS Comments
925 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairperson Petrillo and Members of the Board:

I write on behalf of the City of Milpitas City Council to express support for the conclusion reached by the High Speed Rail Authority in its draft EIR/EIS to use one of two southern alignments (Pacheco Pass or Diablo Range) into the Bay Area and to eliminate the Altamont Pass from further consideration.

The City of Milpitas has long supported the concept of a high-speed rail (HSR) line. Constructing a high-speed rail system would also boost commuter rail service in Silicon Valley. The HSR service will help Caltrain achieve several of its long-term goals: electrification, grade-separation, and increasing the speed and frequency of the commuter rail service. It will also amplify the efforts already underway in our region to improve the connectivity of our existing transit systems.

We support the Authority's decision to reject the Altamont Pass alignment after thorough consideration. The operational and environmental hurdles posed by this route are so high as to make this option impractical. At the same time, we appreciate the concerns environmentalists have raised in relation to the two southern routes proposed by the Authority. However, given the scale of this project, there is no route the high-speed rail could take that would not have an impact on the environment.

The City of Milpitas has consistently advocated that the HSR line utilize a southern alignment into the Bay Area to maximize ridership, minimize operational costs, and ensure that Silicon Valley is served by the new service. For demographic and economic reasons alone, we believe Silicon Valley must serve as the fulcrum for the high-speed rail system in Northern California. Consequently, we strongly support the High Speed Rail Authority's decision to pursue a southern alignment – Pacheco Pass or Diablo Range – into the Bay Area and eliminate the Altamont Pass from further consideration.

Thank you for your leadership on this important project. We look forward to working with you to make California's high-speed rail system a reality.

Sincerely,

Jose S. Esteves
Mayor